GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3611
ANSWERED ON:17.04.2000
FOREST FIRE
THAAWAR CHAND GEHLOT

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the extent and the nature of damage caused owing to forest fire and other diseases in the Government Forest area during the last three years State-wise;

(b) whether any special measure is being taken by the Government to check forest fire and save the trees from the diseases; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS

(SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI)

(a), (b) & (c) : Forests are damaged due to forest fires and other diseases in various states. The subject matter is primarily the responsibility of the state governments who maintain data on forest fires and other diseases. However, Forest Survey of India data on forest fire attributes about 50% of country`s forest area as fire prone and that about 3.73 million ha. of forest area is annually affected by fires, causing an annual loss which has been very moderately estimated as Rs.440 crores. While estimating the loss only the replacement costs of seedlings/plants has been considered and other intangible losses have not been taken into account as these are not measureable. As reported by the state governments, sal forests have been affected by the sal borer in Madhya Pradesh and some parts of Uttar Pradesh during last three years. Also it has been reported that Sheesham trees died on a large scale in 1997 in Bihar due to abnormal climatic conditions and attack of roots by the fungus. Major steps taken by the government for prevention and control of forest fires and other diseases are under:-

(i) A scheme Modern Forest Fire Control Methods is being implemented in eleven states of the country.

(ii) Guidelines have been issued to the state governments to involve local communities in protection of forests under Joint Forest Management Programme.

(iii) To provide more financial outlay, state governments have been advised to treat forest protection as a plan item.

(iv) Categorywise marking of the sal borer affected sal trees has been done to deal with the situation and remove the diseased trees so that the disease may not spread.

(v) In the area where Sheesham trees have died, state government has been advised to remove the dead and dying trees, check debarking of trees on road sides and canal banks and raise mixed plantations instead of pure crop.